

Colorado Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office



NOVEMBER 2018

Who We Are/ Where We Are

Lakewood, CO

Pam Sponholtz,

Project Leader

JoAnn Wise,

Budget Admin

Buckley Air Force Base,

Aurora, CO

Dustin Casady,

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Peterson, Schriever, Chey-

enne Mtn Air Force Bases,

Colorado Springs, CO

Max Canestorp,

Wildlife Biologist

US Air Force Academy,

Colorado Springs, CO

Brian Muhlbachler,

Biological Scientist

Melissa Whittingslow,

Wildlife Biologist

R. Joe Murphy III,

Forester

Bryan Wilfong,

Forestry Technician

Rocky Mountain National

Park, Estes Park, CO

Chris Kennedy,

Fish Biologist

F.E. Warren Air Force Base,

Cheyenne, WY

Alex Schubert,

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

McConnell Air Force Base,

Wichita, KS

Laura Mendenhall,

Fish and Wildlife Biologist

Pueblo Chemical Depot,

Pueblo, CO

Clark Jones,

Wildlife Biologist

Gunnison, CO

Cole Brittain,

Aquatic Biotechnician

SCA Interns

Brock Best

Region 6 Priority Projects

Hunting & Fishing

The USFWS Saratoga National Fish Hatchery stocked approximately 1000 3-year-old male brown trout into North Pearson and South Pearson Lakes to support the recreational fishing program at F.E. Warren AFB.



The F.E. Warren AFB Archery-Only Pronghorn Hunting season was open all through November and

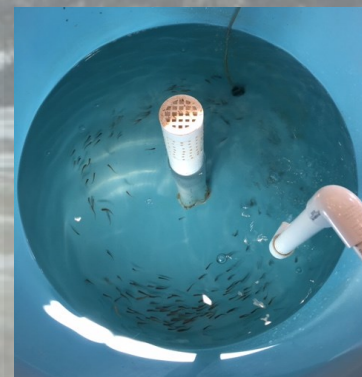
will remain open until the end of December.

Melissa Whittingslow continued working on coordinating the upcoming US Air Force Academy deer hunt in December. This included talking with hunters and making sure all access fees were paid for through the Sportsman page.

Cutthroat Trout Recovery

Chris Kennedy conducted inventory of 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2018 year classes of greenback cutthroat trout at the Leadville National Fish Hatchery. These fish are part of the genetic matrixing program where the relatedness of each possible male-female pairing will be deter-

mined and the most distantly related fish will be spawned. This will help to maximize the limited genetic diversity present in the current broodstock and produce offspring which are stronger and better adapted to stochastic changes in the wild.



Background Photo: Pronghorn bedded down on the golf course at F.E. Warren AFB.

Species Conservation & Management

- Pam Sponholtz and Cole Brittain teamed up with Ryan Unterreiner (Colorado Parks & Wildlife) to assess a barrier removal to create more habitat for the native fishes, including flannelmouth suckers, bluehead suckers, and roundtail chub of southwestern Colorado.
- Laura Mendenhall deployed game cameras in sections of McConnell AFB following the depredation of a white-tailed deer on the airfield as part of a large mammal study to help characterize the deer, coyote, and bobcat populations on McConnell AFB.
- Clark Jones presented at CSU-Pueblo on results from a 2-year burrowing owl study at the Pueblo Chemical Depot. Results from multi-state occupancy models indicate that local extinction rates are higher for burrowing owls on Pueblo Chemical Depot in prairie dog colonies that are more isolated, regardless of the size of the colony, and underscores the importance of habitat connectivity for this species.



Partnerships & Accountability



- Chris Kennedy prepared for and hosted a volunteer appreciation lunch to thank volunteers who contributed over 1100 hours to the Rocky Mountain National Park fisheries program during the summer. Nineteen volunteers attended the lunch which was held at the Rock Cut Brewery in Estes Park.
- Alex Schubert prepared documents for a new 5-year Financial Assistance Agreement for the University of Wyoming, Wyoming Natural Diversity Database (WYNDD) to survey and research populations of Federally-threatened Colorado butterfly plants, and Federally-threatened Preble's meadow jumping mice at F.E. Warren AFB.
- Trapping and relocating raptors in partnership with USDA on Buckley AFB continues to reduce aircraft strike hazards. Raptors are relocated more than fifty miles away from BAFB. Of the 150 plus birds that have been banded on the base, none have been recaptured which could be a sign that the birds are not returning to the airfield.
- Representatives from the USFS Forest Health Protection returned to inspect 2 sites at USAFA: a roundheaded pine beetle infected ponderosa pine and salt infected trees on the Eisenhower Golf Course where reclaimed water is now used to irrigate the grounds. This water has heavier than normal concentrations of salt which has started to distress the Ponderosa Pines along the watered areas. Further monitoring is planned.

Habitat Conservation & Management



Ips Beetle

- Brian Mihlbachler met with La Plata Development LLC to discuss the plan to perform channel stabilization and habitat restoration work on approximately 300-feet of Black Squirrel Creek on USAFA property. La Plata's project will help prevent further upstream headcutting and habitat loss, as well as protect downstream areas from erosion and sedimentation.
- Max Canestorp removed marketable firewood that was left over from previous wildland fire fuels mitigation projects on AF bases. The mitigation work targeted mostly Gambel's oak, and while slash was chipped or masticated, firewood-sized pieces were stacked to be picked up later.
- Max Canestorp, Joe Murphy, Clark Jones and USFS forest entomologist Rebecca Powell toured insect-damaged trees at Cheyenne Mountain AFS. Several trees showed visible damage and signs of stress due to Ips beetle, pine beetle, and road salting. These trees were identified for monitoring or removal to avoid damage to neighboring trees.

Help us welcome our newest staff member, Bryan Wilfong. Bryan will be working as the forestry technician at the U.S. Air Force Academy. Bryan comes to the COFWCO with U.S. Army forestry and U.S. Forest Service experience and a Master of Environmental Science with a focus in invasion ecology. Welcome to Colorado, Bryan!

Background Photo: Erosion of Black Forest Creek at USAFA due to upstream development.